



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HEALTH COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES HEARING ON PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGICAL AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS**

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Monday, Feb. 23, 2015)** – The Arizona House of Representatives Health Committee will hold a public informational hearing on neurological disorders of school age children. The hearing will be held in House Hearing Room 4, tomorrow, February 24th at 2 pm.

The Health Committee is concerned over a recent Center for Disease Control (CDC) report, showing that 13-20 percent of school age children suffer from mental health disorders in a given year. The committee also cited a clinical report of the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP-January 2015), finding that between 37 and 39 percent of children will have been diagnosed with a behavioral or emotional disorder by the age of 16. A significant portion of these disorders are the result of medical conditions, according to experts at the National Institutes of Health and Mental Health.

These conditions, which are caused by the human body's inability to generate a proper response to common viruses like strep throat, can lead to devastating attacks on the brain and other organs. In the case of neurological disorders, the body mistakenly thinks it's sending out antibodies to destroy the virus, while in reality it is attacking healthy brain cells. The attack on these vital portions of the brain then triggers mental or behavioral disorders in children. If left unresolved, these conditions can cause enormous societal costs. The AAP study found that 50 percent of all adults with behavioral health problems reported that their disorders emerged in early adolescence.

To raise the public awareness regarding these medically-based disorders, the Health Committee has invited two speakers to conduct an informational presentation. The committee will first hear from Kari Kling, the parent of a child afflicted with these medical conditions. She is also a public member of the House Ad Hoc Committee on Pediatric Neurological Autoimmune Disorders. Dr. Michael Daines, noted pediatric immunologist/allergist at the University of Arizona Medical Campus and also a public member of the House Ad Hoc Committee on Pediatric Neurological Autoimmune Disorders, will also address the committee.

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